

# Hillandale

## News

No 213 December 1996



HIS MASTER'S BREATH



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Tuesday 25th March 1997



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# Hillandale News

The Official Journal of The City of London Phonograph and Gramophone Society Limited, Co. Reg. No. 3124250

**Founded in 1919**

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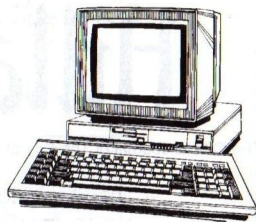
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**Front cover illustration:** "His Master's Breath"

(Thanks to Alan Granleese for the loan of the original 1907 postcard)



## EDITOR'S DESK



### Cleaning up the Sound of Old Records Using DCart

Douglas Lorimer's article on the above subject in the last issue has created quite a lot of interest and resulted in the Booklist receiving several orders for this program. I would be grateful if those who purchased the program would let me know their experiences of using the program. I will publish their letters and pass their comments onto the compilers of the program. I know of one of our members who, after purchasing the program and using it, has made several suggestions for improvements to the compilers who have promised to incorporate some of them in future issues. This sort of feedback is extremely useful in helping to improve the product and give purchasers even better value for their money.

### Hillandale News

I am in desperate need of more articles for our magazine. In order for me to plan ahead I need to have a substantial bank of articles so that I can produce a balance of articles covering as many aspects of our hobby as possible in each issue. This bank is beginning to run rather low. As usual a special plea is made for more articles on machines. Remember that the success of our journal depends on the continual flow of articles from its readers and friends.

### December Meeting

This is an opportune moment to remind readers that since the venue for our London Meetings has reverted to the Bloomsbury Central Baptist Church Halls we have been able to have a tea break in the middle of our meetings. This provides an ideal opportunity for conversation and other social exchanges. The refreshments are provided by Wyn Andrews and Joyce Edwards. For the December meeting these ladies will be providing seasonal fare and members are asked to bring along their choice of recording to share with others. All are welcome to this convivial evening.

### Northern Group

Due to unforeseen circumstances the Annual General Meeting of the Northern Group has had to be postponed until January 19th 1997. This meeting will now be held at Alston Hall, Preston, Lancashire. Bring along your favourite cylinder and/or record to share with the others after the business part of the meeting. Will those who intend being present let Ann Mallinson know (tel: [REDACTED]) at least one week beforehand so that she can arrange the catering with Preston

Please note that material intended for inclusion in *Hillandale News* must reach the Editor not later than **six weeks before the first day of the month of issue.**

Hence the deadline for the **February 1997** issue will be **15th December 1996.**

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# WE ALSO HAVE OUR OWN RECORDS

by Frank Andrews

## Part 1

This is an extended version of the lecture programme given to the C.L.P.G.S. in November 1992. The subject concerned the many "makes" of disc records in the so-called 78rpm era issued by various businesses, which themselves did not usually record or press records. Their discs were recorded and supplied by other organisations. I have previously covered those discs made for and issued by department stores and mail order stores. (See *Hillandale News* Nos. 181, 182, 184, 185 and 186.)

I presented the 'makes' of records in alphabetical order of label except for the first example, Apollo records. The exception was deliberate so that I might mark the centenary of the founding of the Edison Bell Phonograph Corporation Ltd., which took place in November 1892. It was a successor Edison Bell company that provided the first Apollo records, under contract.

The Edison Bell Phonograph Corporation Ltd. was the first registered company to exploit talking machines and recordings in Britain and are rightly acclaimed as the founders of the industry in this country. It is also true that The Edison Bell Phonograph Corporation Ltd. did its utmost to restrict every expansion of the industry, other than that under its own control. It was enabled to do this through its acquisition of the Thomas A. Edison and the Bell-Tainter British patents.

Despite the fact that the primitive Berliner Gramophone with its 5" 'plates' had found outlets in Britain from around 1890 through importing dealers, no company had yet been established to exploit Emile Berliner's invention here. This did not happen until six years later.

Edison Bell did not actually begin business until early 1893 when it began hiring out phonographs to exhibitors, showmen, commercial offices and domestic households. The bulk of its machines, at first, were made by the Edison Works in America especially for the British business. These machines had 200 turns per inch lead screws, unlike the American domestic machines which had 100 t.p.i.

It was not until 1897 that American-made Berliner gramophones and 7" discs began to be sold in Britain by William Barry Owen, working from an office in London. He had been general manager for the National Gramophone Company in New York and whose company headed notepaper he continued to use here whilst he attempted to establish a British company to sell the gramophone and its records.

With the establishment of The Gramophone Company in the spring of 1898, Edison Bell faced its most serious competitor to date. Edison Bell had just failed in their attempt to acquire the rights of the gramophone for this country.

The Gramophone Company began to suffer harassment from Edison Bell and was soon sued for patent infringements. A settlement out of court allowed for both companies to continue thus allowing for a true development and an expansion in the industry and in the market place.

The sales of spring-driven gramophones and 7" discs (both made in America) and plans for the manufacture of discs in Germany forced Edison Bell to change tactics and permit the sale of phonographs and cylinders, although dealers would have to

pay a licence fee on any sale covered by Edison Bell patents. In 1897 James E. Hough's London Phonograph Company (a perpetual infringer of Edison Bell patents) had been given the concession for sales, under the new name of Edisonia Limited. This company sold machines and cylinders at the standard 100 t.p.i., thus allowing Hough's own London Record cylinders and other makes to open up the market.

A reorganisation of the Edison Bell business in 1898 gave the new Edison Bell Consolidated Phonograph Co. Ltd. the right to sell machines and records itself, with Hough becoming its general manager. Edisonia Ltd. was designated the manufacturing arm of the business.

By that time the Gramophone Company had begun to record in London to supplement the Berliner discs which were arriving spasmodically from America. The discs from these London recordings were pressed in Hanover in Germany and were first on sale in this country from about mid-November 1898.

From 1900, the fundamental recording and phonographic patents belonging to Edison Bell began to expire. That was the year American Columbia transferred its European headquarters from Paris to London and American-made Zon-o-phone machines began to arrive in Europe. In 1901 Germany began supplying Zonophone merchandise and in 1902 Edison's National Phonograph Co. Ltd. began operating in London. Then, in 1903, Pathé established its London branch (its products having been available through licensed Edison Bell dealers since 1898).

By this time, 1903, there were three major manufacturers of discs in the market (Columbia, Gramophone and Typewriter Ltd. and Zonophone) and four important cylinder manufacturers (Columbia, Edison, Edison Bell and Pathé). Smaller companies were then proliferating, especially in the cylinder

records arena, and many entrepreneurs entered the market during the next four years or using duplicating machines utilising the gold-moulded recordings of the major brands to put their own makes on the market.

From 1904 German-manufactured discs began arriving from the more important German companies. Odeon were the first, to be followed, in 1905, by Beka Records, Fonotipia and Homophone Records. 1906 saw the arrival of Favorite Records, by which time the disc market was well in the ascendancy. Yet the oldest recording company in Britain (Edison Bell) still refrained from entering the disc recording business. It was not until mid-1908 that it put its "Bell Discs - Genuine Edison Bell Record - British Manufacture" on the market (a double-side disc of 10¼" diameter).

After only eighteen months trading with its new product and its cylinder production continuing, the company was in financial straits and its consolidated business was acquired by its general manager, James E. Hough and his newly founded company J. E. Hough Ltd.

Hough re-commenced production of the Bell Discs in 1910 and it was from their masters that the first Apollo discs were pressed for the proprietors of that label, Messrs. Constantin Craies and Co. of Bunhill Row in the City of London.

Having thus marked the 100th anniversary of the founding of Edison Bell and its launching of the talking machine and record industry in Britain, my lecture continued on to the main subject of *We Also Have Our Own Records*.

### **Apollo Records - variously labelled**

In September 1906 Constantin Craies had been appointed the managing director for the London-based business of Neophone Ltd., but when the company was put into



liquidation only five months later (February 1907) Craes was appointed liquidator. He resigned the following month.

It was then that he began a business in Bunhill Row, E.C. as Constantin Craes and Co. and obtained the telegraphic code of "Discolus". "Apollo" was applied for registration as a trade mark in August and was registered in November 1907. The trade mark had a depiction of the Greek sun-god Apollo. This was applied to the Apollo gramophones and records and probably to other talking machine products which the company handled.

By the Autumn of 1908, Craes had acquired John Alexander Stavridi as a partner and the trading name of the company was altered to Craes and Stavridi - Talking Machine Makers.

The first issues of **Apollo Gramophone Records** were advertised in a trade periodical in December 1910. They were 10¼" in diameter, double-sided and sold for 1s.6d. Over 130 different discs were produced from J. E. Hough Ltd.'s Bell Disc masters.

{One side of Apollo Gramophone Record 34 was played with George Wilson singing Bennett Scott's song *Ship Ahoy*. This originally appeared on Bell Disc 150, issued in February 1910.}

Once **The Winner** records from the new The Winner Record Company had gone on sale in February 1912, Craes and Stavridi issued a red and gold labelled **Apollo Grand Record** pressed from the Winner masters at the Winner works which shared a building at Camberwell with J. E. Hough Ltd. The matrix stock were of recordings from the years 1912 to 1914 and possibly later.

A few monthly supplements of 1913 reveal they were almost identical in content with The Winner supplements. The catalogue series began at 1 and at least 314 different discs were offered. Originally priced at 2s.0d., the recommended price of The Winner, they were reduced to 1s.6d. each in

1913 to match the same reduction in The Winner.

**Apollo Green Label Record** was the name-style of a new disc from a different manufacturer. These 10" discs were first advertised in July 1913. The green and gold labels also bear the "C & S" initials of Craes and Stavridi. A feature of the red-labelled discs was that there was no picture of Apollo's head. This matrix stock originated from Messrs. Blum and Co. Ltd. of London, whose recordings for its **Victory** and **Diploma** records had been undertaken by Kalliopeusikwerke A.G.'s experts and then processed and pressed in Kalliope's Leipzig factory. The Blum German matrices were later lost to the London firm. The Apollo Green Label Record had a 10,000 catalogue number series. Originally priced at 1s.6d. each they were reduced to 1s.1d. each during the price war which opened the 1913-1914 season. The onset of the Great War brought the series to an abrupt end.

There was another type of Apollo Record for which I do not have a label description. I am aware of only one example, another German pressing with a 6,000 matrix number series, suffixed KV. The source is probably the Schallplatten Globophon G.m.b.H (as Globophon had British artists and titles in a 6,000 master series; I believe Eclipse Records and Festival Records also used these masters). The records were 10" in diameter. The onset of the 1914 war brought an end to this style of Apollo record. Some of the Globophon titles date from 1910/11.

## Ace Records

Turning now to a stricter alphabetical order of label names belonging to other proprietors, the first in hand is the **Ace Record**. Unfortunately, as with some other labels, I have yet to discover who owned the label, which was blue, black, white and red showing the four aces from a pack of playing cards.

Examples seen state "British Made" and "Copyright Film Recording" and are of the type made by using a coating of nitro-cellulose with solvents on an aluminium type of metal base. The example screened at the meeting had titles on general release by the by the popular labels in November 1937. This type of lacquer disc had been developed by Cecil E. Watts, who claimed to have been turning out 3,000 blank discs per week in the years 1935-36 at his workshops near Kew Bridge on the river Thames.

Interestingly, Mr Watts has stated that, in the nineteen-thirties, Film Studios bought his and/or other recording machines. One was installed in the Dominion Cinema, Tottenham Court Road. If the Cinema Exhibitors' Association (C. E. A.) were the actual owners of the Dominion it is just possible that **Ace Records** were so named because ACE is simply a juxtaposition of their initials.

Incidentally, the C. E. A. had been taking Octacros Records to supply cinemas, for Octacros were not subject to performing rights charges, but Octacros's last known issues came out about February 1937, some nine months before the Ace records titles came out on mainstream labels.

### **Addisco - Limited Edition**

This is another label, whose owner I have not yet discovered. What I do know is that it appears to have re-issued re-recordings from Paramount Records, a product of the New York Recording Laboratories of circa 1925.

Paramount recordings did come into Britain through Winner records between 1923 and 1927 but not the particular matrix 1532 from catalogue number 20272.

I have no idea when **Addisco** records became available.

### **Addison or Addison Record**

I have seen no example, so I am not sure of the label style. A 12" example is known with MRS prefixed matrices, which suggests the sides were recorded by a recording studio for private contract work. There was no catalogue number common to both sides. Who owned the label and who recorded and produced the discs has yet to be discovered.

### **Adelphi Record**

With only a few of these discs known, the proprietor of the label has still to be unearthed. The discs were 10" in diameter and were pressed at Hayes by the Vocalion Gramophone Co. Ltd., which was still pressing Guardsman discs for Messrs. Lugton and Co. Ltd. (the last proprietor of the Guardsman label). Lugton's never mentioned Adelphi Records in any of their advertisements.

At least two of the Adelphi sides are known to have come from masters of Vocalion Records in America, and were issued here on Guardsman circa December 1925. They were recorded by the mechanical recording process. Other Adelphi titles are electrically recorded.

Adelphi was never registered as a trade mark although the word Adelfian was registered to a Mr Gerald Stanton, of 111 Queen Victoria Street, London E.C.4 for his line in gramophones from July 1925. There can only be a faint possibility that he had Adelphi Records supplied to complement his machines, but his trade mark may have prevented "Adelphi" being registered to any other proprietor.

{Adelphi Record No.21 (Guardsman 2025) from an American Vocalion matrix on one side was played. Irving Kaufman as Bob King (Sammy Burton on Guardsman) sang *Hello Bluebird*, composed by Cliff Friend.}



## Admiral Records

**Admiral Record** became a registered trade mark of the Admiral Corporation, 3801 West Cortland Street, Chicago on March 30th 1946. Although the Admiral Corporation had a British trade mark, I have no evidence that Admiral records were on general sale in Britain. If they were ordinary entertainment records, they may well have been available from a concessionaire, specialist dealer or any other outlet.

## Admiralty Records

The main business of The Admiralty was to see to it that Britain's Royal Navy remained on even keel! E.M.I. Ltd., alone, made 108 discs at least, for The Admiralty, in 10", 12" and 16" sizes, comprising six different series, one of which was for *HMS Osprey*. All were double-sided discs, except for one. Obviously they were not designed for sale to the public. It is probable that Decca Record Co. Ltd also supplied specialist recordings for Admiralty purposes. It may be that Admiralty Record did not appear on the labels. If so, what did?

## Adprint Long Playing Record

In spite of the name style, these small 7" discs played at 78rpm and were produced by E.R.D. Studios. In the example shown at the meeting the repertoire was of a kind suitable for younger children.

The proprietor's name is unknown unless it was Adprint itself. Was the recording programme designed to boost printed books? The date of issue is unknown.

## Advox Record

As the name may imply, Advox Records might have produced as a medium for advertising purposes, but I know of no extant examples of this make of disc. The name was a registered trade mark of Mr

Cecil Bedford, who had an address in Ilford, Essex, from November 1929. The mark also covered talking machines.

## Aeolian Vocalion and Aco Records

(See Hillandale News Nos. 116, 117 and 118)

Although the Aeolian and Orchestrelle companies had their own lines in musical merchandise before they took up with machines and records, both in the U.S.A. and in Britain, they do not qualify for *We Also Have Our Own Records*, because they actually became a recording and pressing business in their own right and eventually received contract work themselves. We, therefore, pass over these labels to:

## The Aeolian Company Ltd.

(New Bond Street, London W.1.)

Six years after having disposed of its machine and records business to The Vocalion Gramophone Co. Ltd. in 1925, the Aeolian Company began having special records made by the Vocalion company which were designed to be played in conjunction with automatic pianos using the newly-introduced *Meloto Music Rolls*, manufactured by the Universal Music Co. Ltd. I have not seen any of the discs but I believe them to be styled as above. This is all that I have found out about this label at the present.

## The Aeonic Unbreakable Call-Sign Gramophone Record

The proprietor of this "one-off" make of disc was Aeonic Radio Co. Ltd, which had showrooms at 90 Regent Street, London W.1.

The disc was 6" in diameter and all the relevant information concerning its function was printed on its surfaces by the manufacturers, the Goodson Gramophone Record Co. Ltd.

First advertised in September 1929, the disc shows a map of the world on its surface, across which are representations of many broadcasting radio stations' wavelengths. This was a facility enabling one to identify any short-wave radio station both by its call-sign and by the station's announcements in the language it used - the call-signs usually comprised a combination of letters of the alphabet and numbers.

Each radio station's line shown on the disc had a point marked at which to place the needle of the gramophone. One could then hear the chosen station's spoken call-sign and the language in which it announced itself. All the speech was recorded by The Linguaphone Institute Ltd.

The discs remained available for about a year. A copy was given away with each purchase of an Aeonic radio receiver designed to receive short-wave radio stations.

Around the edge of the discs was printed the warning: "Wavelengths mentioned are fictitious, and should be corrected by reference to press announcements."

### **Aerial Record**

Not to be confused with J. G. Graves' Ariel Grand Records, the 10" diameter **Aerial Record's** proprietor remains unknown.

Only six discs are known having black and red labels, which make up the B prefixed catalogue series. All can be seen to be made from the matrices used in the pressing of the Duophone Unbreakable Record Co.Ltd.'s M and UB catalogue series.

The probable restriction of the **Aerial** catalogue to six discs was possibly the result of representations made by J. G. Graves and Co. whose Ariel registered trade marks were still extant.

It is not known when **Aerial Records** were introduced.

### **Aerona**

**Aerona Records** were recorded and manufactured by the Crystalate Manufacturing Co, Ltd. in Kent. They were made for the Australian firm of Salkeld and Wallace Ltd. of 119 Clarence Street, Sydney, N.S.W.. Salkeld and Wallace had registered Aerona as a trade mark in Britain in April 1926.

The discs were 7" in diameter and pre-date the 7" Victory records which the Crystalate company made exclusively for F. W. Woolworth and Co. Ltd. In fact when the Aerona trade mark was registered the Victory trade mark was still owned by the Columbia Graphophone Co. Ltd., which had acquired it some time earlier from J. L. Blum and Co. Ltd. It remained in Columbia's possession until 1928. Crystalate sold its own 7" disc as Imperial Junior Records and it pressed the 7" Oliver Record for another client.

As Aeronas are rarely found in Britain it appears likely that they were not on general sale here.

### **The A. F. M. C. Series of Educational Records and The A. F. M. C. Series of Educational Gramophone Records**

The first proprietor of the above labelled discs was the Anglo-French Music Co. Ltd., which had been founded by certain composers and professors of music, with two directors of the Aeolian Co. Ltd. in 1916. It was established to publish music scores and tutors for music students. By the time the company had been certified to commence business on September 15th 1916 a few other prominent musicians and another director of the Aeolian Company had become shareholders.

The company's first premises were in York Place, near Baker Street, London W.1., into which street it relocated in late 1920. The stay there was short for, for April 1922, the Company was in Wimpole Street, London



W.1. It was from that address that the first A. F. M. C. records were announced, with all titles recorded on the pianoforte by Desirée MacEwen. The pieces played were all graded to match the examination of the Associated Board of the Royal Academy of Music and the Royal College of Music in London.

As one would expect, the discs had already been recorded by the Aeolian Company and pressed at Hayes, Middlesex by its associate, the Universal Music Co. Ltd. The 21 discs issued varied between the 10" and 12" sizes.

A 12" disc issued later, in July 1923, had the composer/teacher/player Tobias Matthay playing some of his own compositions. Matthay, who had taught such celebrated pianists as Irene Scharrer and Dame Myra Hess, had been one of the founders of the Anglo-French Music Company, and has been considered an important enough figure to have one of those blue commemorative plates attached to a building in Hampstead which he had occupied for some time as a teacher.

More discs were issued in October 1923 and recorded by such pianists as Margaret Bennett, York Bowen, Hilda Dederich, Margaret Portch and Egerton Tidmarsh. All the pieces they recorded were set for the 1924 examinations of the Associated Board.

In late 1924 the slight change in the name style took place and the Parlophone Co. Ltd. (which had just entered its second year of operation in Britain) took over the recording and pressing. The Parlophone recording studios were at Carlton Hill, Maida Vale, London W. and their factory was at The Mead Works in Gas House Lane, Hertford Town. These works had been built by Carl Lindström (London) Ltd. before the first world war.

The change to the Parlophone Company may have been caused by the dismissal of the managing director from the board of The Aeolian Co. Ltd., who was also a director of the Anglo-French Music Company.

The 2,000 catalogue series was continued for both sizes disc. The piano recordings were then shared between Hilda Dederich, Dorothy Howell, Rae Robertson and Alec Rowley. The pieces recorded were those set for all grades of the forthcoming examinations of the Trinity College of Music in London.

All A.F.M.C. records could be ordered from record dealers and were priced at 3s. 6d. for the 10" size and 5s. for the 12".

Three non-pianoforte discs were issued on nos. 2055 to 2057. The six sides were devoted to lectures by Mrs Tobias Matthay on *The Joy of Speaking Poetry*.

During the early part of 1925 the Music department of the Oxford University Press, which was founded in 1924 with Hubert Foss as its first editor and manager, began to advertise the A.F.M.C. records. The Anglo-French Music Company went into liquidation in April 1925, the company at that time being described as a company related to the Oxford University Press Ltd.

In the autumn of 1928 the Oxford University Press prepared 50 carefully graded pieces for its Anglo-French Piano Scores Series and its own Oxford Piano Scores Series. They were divided into four grades for the forthcoming examinations of the Associated Board of The Royal Academy of Music, the Royal College of Music and the Trinity College of Music, but there was no mention of any of the pieces being recorded as had been done in earlier years.

{Demonstrated was A.F.M.C. 2041 (matrix 003986), Hilda Dederich playing *Au Couvent* by Borodin}

**To be continued.**

# LAMBERT (LONDON) BROWN WAX CYLINDERS

by John S. Dales

Fellow member, and friend, Richard Taylor recently found a carrying case of cylinders amongst which were several brown waxes of  $4\frac{1}{4}$ " length. On playing them Richard was surprised, and indeed I was, to learn that these extra long cylinders and a couple of others were announced as "Lambert".

The Lambert Company (London), according to Frank Andrews' History published in 1974, was registered on 11th April 1904. The company was in business to produce black celluloid cylinders and later "Rex", announced as such, hard black wax cylinders. I again read through Frank's account carefully to identify the possibility of any brown wax cylinder production but no clues were revealed.

My initial telephone conversation with Richard Taylor confirmed that these were Lambert brown waxes. Housed in a carrying case, the cylinders were not in individual boxes, making positive identification more difficult.

Prior to examining the cylinders I considered the possibility of pirated recordings. The illegal copying of cylinder records was rife in Britain during the early years of this century. However, since acquiring these brown waxes I am now of a different opinion.

The cylinders total twelve in quantity. Eleven of them were recorded by Edison Bell either for, or in association with, the Lambert Company (London) during 1904 and announced as "Lambert Record". Identical titles were recorded by Edison Bell, probably during the same session, for their

own catalogue and announced as "Edison Bell Record".

The cylinders are moulded and roughly finished especially at the lead-on end. Moulding chips are evident on all examples.

All play at 160rpm and are loud and clear.

Two cylinders are of a medium brown colour similar to the Edison Bell "Popular" series. The remainder are an intense dark brown colour that appears black in artificial light.

Two cylinders are of the standard length  $4\frac{3}{16}$ " approximately. The others average  $4\frac{1}{2}$ " in length. However, the increased length does not accommodate extra playing time as is the case with the later extended length issues of Edison Bell, Sterling and Clarion.

One example has a channelled rim title end similar to the Lambert (London) celluloid issues. The remainder have flat ends similar to the Edison Bell regular "Popular" series. Only two show brief titles in script.

Eleven of the cylinders have a moulded raised number with the suffix L on the 'title end'. Of these, only five were to become actual catalogue numbers in the Lambert (London) listings. The only other visible identification are small numbers or wording etched into the surface, during the master stage, after the playing grooves.

I am now of the opinion that these Lambert brown wax cylinders are secondary, or sub-masters, and have reached that conclusion for the following reasons:

1. Original, or master, cylinders were obtained direct at the recording session.



The number of masters yielded depended on repeat performances multiplied by the actual recording machines used. Some concerns produced a secondary, or sub-master, from the original by either the pantograph system or moulding. This was to meet the anticipated high demand for certain popular selections. I have no written evidence regarding Edison Bell's production methods but the Edison Company in the U.S.A. at one stage produced master moulds from the original in order to obtain working moulds. Possibly Edison Bell followed a similar pattern of production. This would account for the moulded Lambert brown waxes and a few similar Edison Bell issues in my collection.

2. Edison Bell no doubt accumulated large stocks of master (and sub-master) cylinders. They were offered for sale to the public as and when available, at double the price of regular issues.
3. During the period of moulded cylinders, pre-production masters were often only semi-finished. Prior to the manufacture of a working mould the master had to be turned to the required length with bevelled ends and where the appropriate titles are engraved. The internal bore had to be reamed. How this task was accomplished on a lathe, or whatever, I shudder to think. Nevertheless, this would account for the increased length of the Lambert brown waxes, the rough lead-on end and the solitary moulded identification number.

As is often the case for the present-day researcher, when studying a particular batch of records, a maverick appears, and sure enough, one is here.

One of the cylinders has a date, etched into the surface after the playing grooves, in the American fashion as 1/22 03 (22nd January

1903). The selection is *Gypsy Life* played by the London Regimental Band augmented by members of the Queen's Hall Orchestra. Although this recording did appear in the Edison Bell catalogues it is not shown amongst the known titles of the Lambert Company (London). Also, although this cylinder is of the extended length it does not have the moulded identification number with suffix L. It was recorded around a year before the others. Again, I can only offer an opinion.

At that time, January 1903, Edison Bell had an established business arrangement with the Lambert Company, Chicago, U.S.A. Edison Bell supplied the Chicago concern with wax masters to be processed as dyed-pink celluloid indestructible cylinders, then returned them in London for packaging and sale. Edison Bell also supplied Lambert (Chicago) with additional wax masters to supplement their own catalogue. These were mostly announced as "Lambert Record" and were band and instrumental selections. This Lambert announced version I feel was prepared by Edison Bell for eventual use by the Chicago concern.

This title appears in Allen Koenigsberg's extensive listing of this company's output, but accredited to the Bohemian Band. Apart from the etched date, the abbreviation 'Lam #2' also appears after the playing grooves. Please note the American symbol # for number. The date and abbreviation could have been the hand of the recording engineer, Russell Hunting, who is certainly the announcer.

This article is accompanied by a listing of the Lambert brown waxes.

In conclusion, I should like to thank Richard Taylor for finding these unusual cylinders and bringing them to my attention.

EDISON-BELL/LAMBERT (LONDON) WAX MASTER CYLINDERS

CYLINDER NUMBER	ETCHED DETAILS	CATALOGUE NUMBER (See Remarks)	SPOKEN ANNOUNCEMENT	REMARKS
-	Lam #2 1/22 03		'Gipsy Life' played by the London Regimental Band and members of the Queen's Hall Orchestra, Lambert Record	Recorded for Lambert (Chicago) as their #1003
7.L	Lambert 7	7	'The Guards Waltz' played by the London Regimental Band, Lambert Record	
9.L	Lambert 9	9	Descriptive selection 'A Hunting Scene' played by the London Regimental Band, Lambert Record	
16.L	BOB	4	March 'The Boys Of The Old Brigade' played by the London Regimental Band, Lambert Record	
20.L	5072	5072	Mr Gus Elen's popular song 'The New Perjarma Hat' sung by Harry Bluff, Lambert Record	
109.L	109	109	'The Silver Bird' piccolo solo played by Mr Eli Hudson, Lambert Record	'Piccolo Solo' in script title end
110.L	63	63	'The Avenue March' played by the Lambert Military Band	
111.L	5099	5099	The popular song 'Bluebell' sung by Mr Leonard Dawson, Lambert Record	Artist is Peter Dawson
112.L	130	130	Banjo solo 'Gallopade' played by Mr Olly Oakley, Lambert Record	
116.L	116	116	Flute solo 'Waltz in D Flat' by Chopin played by Mr Eli Hudson, Lambert Record	
5010.L	75	216	March 'Hail To The Spirit Of Liberty' played by the Lambert Military Band	Channelled rim
5070.L	5070	5070	Popular comic song 'Hold Yer Row' sung by Harry Bluff, Lambert Record	'Hold Yer Row' in script title end



# FROM THE ROSTRUM



The July 31st sale at Christie's South Kensington saw an unusually high number of phonographs and gramophones on offer, most of them from the collection of a deceased C.L.P.G.S. member.

While it was not the most impressive collection we have seen in terms of quality, it contained a number of interesting items and also useful bits and pieces such as an oxidised Model K reproducer - just the thing for all those Idelia owners. Admittedly the fantail weight was in humble nickel-plate, but someone was prepared to bid £70 for it.

Remarkably, the sale contained three Operas (or, to be precise, two Operas and a Concert, not to mention an Edison Bell Duplex version of the other kind of Concert). None of the three was perfect, but the best, in mahogany with a Model L reproducer as well as a Diamond A, but missing a lid, sold for £3,200. The next, in oak, made £2,200; it had a lid, and a Diamond A reproducer, but the horn had been stripped and repolished, and still needed some repair to the joints. The third, the Concert, was in mahogany, but had lost its original horn. It was equipped with a simulated mahogany horn (probably of papier-mâché, whalehide or something similar), attached to a BTH radio speaker neck, and at £850, this was about par for an Opera without its all-important horn and correct neck.

The earlier Concert was one of Edison Bell's underpowered dual-mandrel versions with a Home motor. As so often, the slip-on Concert mandrel was a modern replacement, but it had a banner transfer reading EDISON CONCERT DUPLEX. Some might rate such a machine a curiosity rather than a 'must have', but two people felt otherwise and it reached £2,100.

One of the surprises of the sale was £1,600 for a Model A Triumph. It had a two and four-minute conversion, with a K reproducer, but no horn, and it is difficult to see why this was considered so much more desirable than the last Model A Triumph sold in these rooms (for £500). Two lots later, an unconverted Model B Triumph sold for £300. The first was the better example, but was it really £1,300 better?

Other points of interest among cylinder machines included a Twentieth-Century Premier Graphophone (minus much of the mechanically-amplified stylus linkage, but with a rare two/four minute gearchange)

at £480, and a suitcase Standard with the extraordinarily low serial number S184, at £450. A Pathé Aiglon (one of the 'Coq' variations, with no wood-work) was still in its cardboard carton. Admittedly this was quite a stout carton, and clearly intended as more than just a transit case, since it was shown (and referred to as a 'case') in the 1904 London Pathé catalogue, but few can have survived. £180 found a new home for this. A Columbia BE ('Leader') with the seldom surviving aluminium witch's hat horn brought £380, and £100 less bought a Type AA, one of the most attractive Graphophones. This was one of those that had been re-badged as a Dulcetto by the Phono Exchange of Berners St., London, but in this instance the Dulcetto transfer had faded enough to let the original Graphophone banner show through clearly.

A rather tired Edison disc machine (no grille, no lid-stay, Model A 100, 'Moderne') reached £380, mostly, no doubt, on account of its Long Play attachment. On the lateral front, a very handsome Klingsor in a Sheraton-style mahogany case reached £700. Doubtless it would have been more, had the 'soundboard' not become distorted by the pull of those strings over the years. An HMV Model 5 mahogany horn machine sounds cheap at £700, but there was a large repaired break in the horn. By contrast, a very clean Model 2, also with a mahogany horn, brought £1,600: it had a wrong soundbox and the motor was jammed, but these are matters easily put right. An EMG Mark Xb deserved its £2,700, but horn problems on a Mark IX (it was sagging a bit, as so often on this model, and had been painted silver) kept the price down to £900.

From the largest horns to the smallest; a Pixie Grippa made no less than £380, topping the £360 paid in April for a pristine red example. This one was not pristine, but it was the 'Lady's Boudoir' model, in real leather with a strange mottled pink and blue design. The lockable lid catch still had its key, complete with a tab in matching leather. That's got to be a rare survival!

A smart Columbia AJ travelling arm machine brought £1,200, and another travelling-armer, un-named but pretty certainly an Odeon and in very clean, original condition changed hands at £850. Recent correspondents on Cliftophones might have liked the cabinet model that sold for all of £50, while an HMV Model 56 (a smallish, attractive No.4 soundbox model of 1927-8) went to £220. Finally for those whose interests extend beyond the field of reproduced sound, there was a Apollophone player-piano with built-in gramophone. This wacky hernia-inducer attracted £2,600.

(The prices quoted above are all hammer prices, subject to the Buyer's premium of 15%.)

**Christopher Proudfoot**





#### RELATIVE VALUES

Top: Triumph Model B, 2-minute £300  
 Bottom: Triumph Model A, 2/4-min £1,600





Two Graphophones: Type BE ('Leader') (£380) (left) and Type AJ (£1,200) (right)

## FORTHCOMING MEETINGS IN LONDON

The London Meetings are held in the **Parlour Room** at the **Bloomsbury Central Baptist Church Halls**, 235 Shaftesbury Avenue, London WC2H 8EL at **7pm** on the **third Tuesday of the month**.

**January 21st 1997**

Tom Little will talk on *The Family Business: Bayreuth*.

**February 18th**

Peter Copeland will continue with Part 2 of his talk on *The Engineer and the Artist*.

**March 18th**

Chris Hamilton - *A Taste of Scotland*.

**April 15th**

Ewan Langford will give a programme about the professional career of his mother the singer Caroline Hatchard (1910-1932) entitled *My Mother, Aunts, Uncles and Friends*.



## CLPGS PHONOFAIR '96

A typical British spring can play havoc with the weather, and so for my debut as Society Bookshop stallholder at the Phonofair '96, hosted by Ruth Lambert, the car had to be loaded in a blizzard and left out in the street.

Saturday, of course, dawned dry and by the time we had joined the Motorway, the previous night's snow was hard to find. So in hot, sunny weather the April Phonofair quickly gathered momentum, as more collectors visited a greater number of stalls. All was well organised and set up in two halls with the usual excellent catering arrangements, which on a day spent talking and collecting were much appreciated.

Sandwiched in a corner, I had little time to inspect the 'goodies' which seemed to abound. Everybody seemed to be getting bargains. I glimpsed a Bettini disc - [yes, I know, we really only expect to see cylinders], a so-called 'concrete' Pathé with its distinctive red background and gold trademark. Phonographs demonstrated the eternal durability of Harry Bluff vying with the upstart Gramophone playing Billy Williams. Such machines also passed into new ownership, with brass horns and soundboxes being fitted into that odd corner under the armrest on the back seat of the car.

We had a standing room only attendance for the Extraordinary Meeting held at 2.30pm. The necessary changes to the wording of our constitution were read out, and, after some debate, carried almost unanimously.

Personally I am pleased that Ruth is able to hold this event in the original venue, which from the motorway, is well sign-posted. There is a budding traffic warden to direct you into easy parking, and the rooms are large and well lit. Thanks to A. J. George for supplying the photographs

**George Woolford**







Mike Field, Reg Fisher and Richard Taylor compare notes



A Far Eastern visitor and Mr S. J. Cully in the throes of a deal



## **BENTLEY CONCERT PRODUCTIONS PRESENTS**

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## **(C.L.P.G.S.) BOOKLIST**

*DCart - Diamond Cut Audio Restoration Tools.*  
(Computer program for enhancing reproduction of  
78s, described by Douglas Lorimer in last issue.)  
**£45 plus postage.**

*The Columbia Phonograph Companion, Volume  
II: The Columbia Disc Graphophone and the  
Grafonola* by Robert W. Baumbach (with data  
collected by Mac Lackey). is available at **£20 plus  
postage.**

*The Compleat Talking Machine* (2nd Edition) by  
Eric L. Reiss is now available at **£25 plus  
postage.**

#### **Postage**

**U.K.** Items with a total value of **£5** or less **add  
50p.** Items over **£5** value up to & including **£10  
add £1.00.** Items with a total value over **£10** add  
10%

**Overseas add 15%** of total price unless total  
order is less than **£1**, then apply minimum charge  
of **£1.**

## **CHANGE OF ADDRESS**

Please note that George Woolford has  
moved and that the new address of the  
Society's Booklist is now:

**c/o George Woolford,**

[REDACTED]  
**Wells-next-the-Sea,  
Norfolk NR23 1RD**

**Tel:** [REDACTED]



# *Recorded Vocal Art Society*

President: VIVIAN LIFF

Vice Presidents: PAT GORDON GORDON BROMLY

The Recorded Vocal Art Society was formed in 1953 to  
encourage the enjoyment of Opera and Song

*Bloomsbury Institute  
Bloomsbury Central Baptist Church  
235 Shaftesbury Avenue*

Junction New Oxford Street - Almost opposite Oasis Swimming Pool  
Nearest tubes - Tottenham Court Road or Holborn

## **Programme 1996 / 97**

### **1996**

<i>Sept 10</i>	UNCONSIDERED TRIFLES	<i>Vivian Liff</i>
<i>Sept 24</i>	THE EDINBURGH FESTIVAL	<i>Eileen Miller</i>
<i>Oct 8</i>	LUISA TETRAZZINI	<i>Charles Neilson Gattley</i>
<i>Oct 22</i>	TREASURES FROM THE HAROLD BARNES COLLECTION	<i>Richard Bebb</i>
<i>Nov 12</i>	SINGERS ON G&T AND H&D	<i>Colin Pryke</i>
<i>Nov 26</i>	PERFORMANCES ABROAD - RECORDINGS AT HOME	<i>Kenneth Hebben</i>
<i>Dec 10</i>	IN MEMORY OF DS-T	<i>John Steane</i>

### **1997**

<i>Jan 14</i>	TITANIC VOICES	<i>Richard Copeman</i>
<i>Jan 28</i>	SCOTTISH FOLK SONG	<i>Alan Palmer</i>
<i>Feb 11</i>	RIGHT SINGER, WRONG LANGUAGE	<i>Alan Blyth</i>
<i>Feb 25</i>	SONG IN OPERA	<i>Richard Stokes</i>
<i>Mar 11</i>	NEEDLE DIGS	<i>Hilary Stainer</i>
<i>Mar 25</i>	THE FRENCH TRADITION	<i>Robert Bunyard</i>
<i>April 8</i>	AIRS AND GRACES	<i>Paul Lewis</i>
<i>April 29</i>	SINGERS FROM GREECE	<i>Ian Martin</i>
<i>May 13</i>	(a) A.G.M. (b) COMMEMORATIONS	<i>Tom Peel</i>
<i>May 27</i>	I'LL SING THEE SONGS OF ARABY	<i>Paul Steinson</i>
<i>June 10</i>	THE LIRICO SPINTO VOICE	<i>Alan Bilgora</i>
<i>June 24</i>	THEMSELVES WHEN YOUNG	<i>John T. Hughes</i>
<i>July 8</i>	POLISH SINGERS SINCE THE WAR	<i>Alfred Orda</i>

**All Meetings begin at 7.00 p.m and normally close at 9.00 p.m**

MEMBERSHIP £12.00 payable to the Hon. Treasurer at the Meetings

ATTENDANCE FEE per meeting: MEMBERS £1.00 (inc coffee) VISITORS £2.00 (inc. coffee)

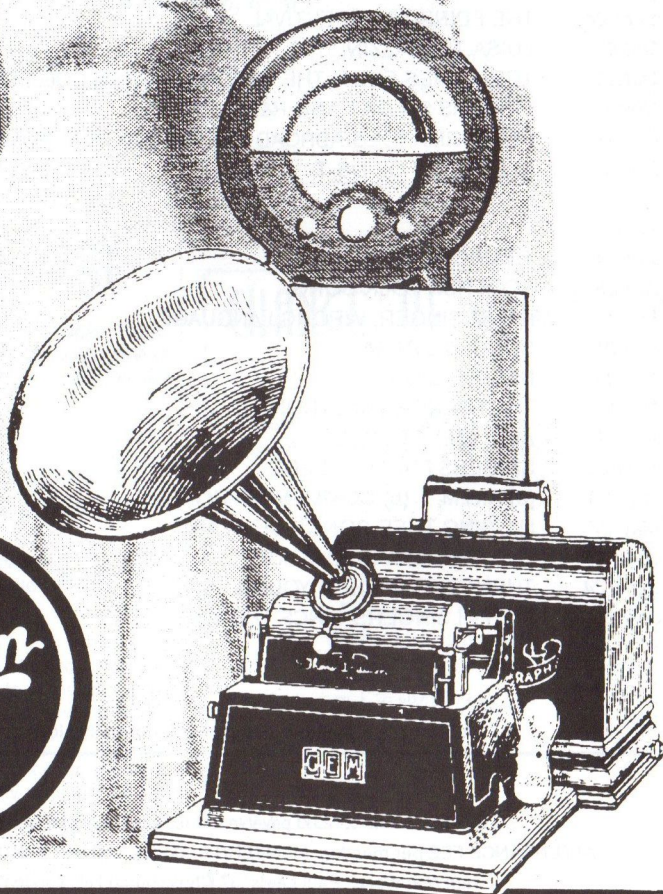
Hon Secretary: Paul Lewis, [REDACTED] London NW3 1LA

Hon Treasurer: Eliot Levin, [REDACTED] East Barnet, Hertfordshire EN4 8LZ

# Brian Taylor Antiques

24 Molesworth Rd.  
Plymouth PL1 5LZ  
ENGLAND

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An EMG Mk. 10 'Oversize' Gramophone, English,  
*circa* 1947. Sold on 3rd March 1994 for £5,500.

# MECHANICAL MUSICAL INSTRUMENTS

Thursday and Friday 6th and 7th March 1997

Appraisals given without obligation or charge.

For further information, contact: Jon Baddeley

34 - 35 NEW BOND STREET, LONDON W1A 2AA

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## A DATE WITH BIG BERTHA

### by Miles Mallinson

Once again I had the opportunity to experience the magical sound of 'Big Bertha', the gentle giant of a gramophone, built and installed at Nimbus records, near Monmouth in 1992. I had been approached by Richard Taylor to help in a display of talking machines to be shown by members of C.L.P.G.S. to the public during the afternoon and before the evening concert given on Saturday 22nd June 1996 by Norman White. Our members set up a display of some 30 machines, including the Society's own EMG Expert Junior, as well as discs, cylinders, needle tins, preeners, sharpeners and other ephemera.

At 7.30pm the 'Prima Voce' concert commenced, with Norman giving a brief history of the transferring technique used by Nimbus, and the three stages of development from EMG Mark 10b oversize, followed by a modern straight horn version of the EMG and then the 6' 9" diameter by 22" long '**Big Bertha**' horn gramophone.

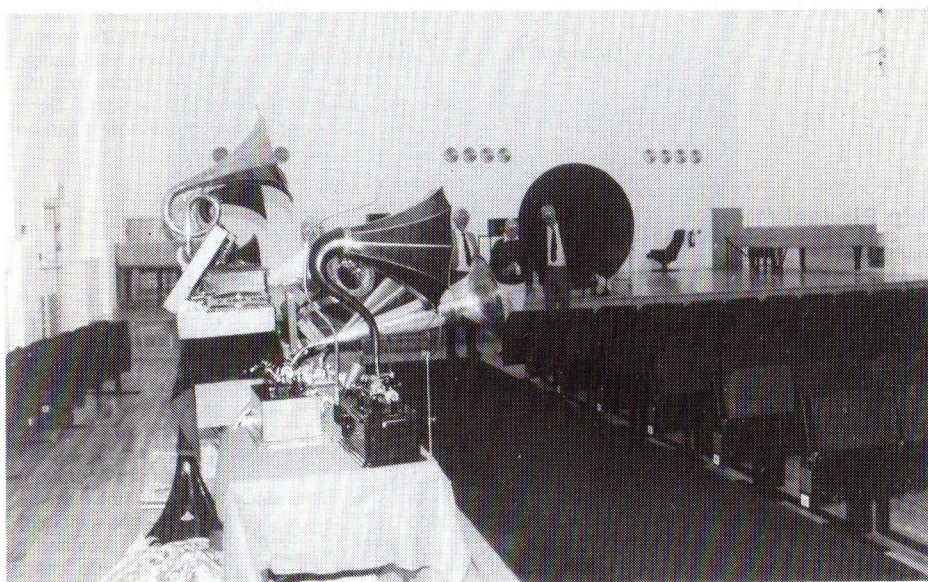
I had heard this beautiful instrument some three years ago when I was invited to write an article for *Hillandale News* (No.197, April 1994). At that time, although I heard it perform, it was only a transfer machine operating in short bursts before being stopped, and just as the emotions of the performance were being aroused, the sound stopped, being interrupted by Norman talking about blisters, blasts or blunt needles. On this occasion there was none of this. Here the glorious sound engulfed one as if the original performer was present, the audience applauding each record. It is difficult to describe the reality of this sound without sounding 'over the top', but those who have heard it know what I mean. The sound is not loud, as there is no amplification in the system, and when first heard it

appears rather too quiet but after a little time this is not noticed and the pure delicacy of the voice is appreciated.

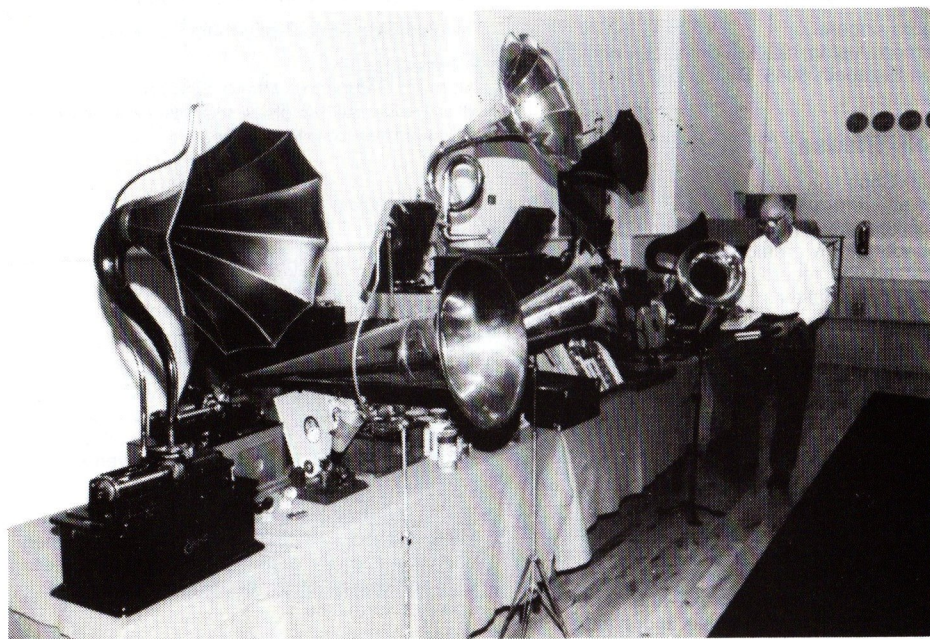
The programme on this occasion included Enrico Caruso who opened with *Over There*, from July 1918; Alma Gluck singing *Listen to the Mocking Bird* from 1916. I have a copy of the Alessandro Bonci item Norman played, *A te o cara*, but had not really appreciated his wonderful control of voice until this Nimbus Concert. Rosa Ponselle performed her magical *Kiss Me Again*, followed by two pieces from Clara Butt, *Brindisi* from Donizetti's *Lucrezia Borgia* and a late recording of *A Fairy Went a Market-ing*. John Charles Thomas with *Sailormen* brought the first half of the concert to a close. After refreshments, Feodor Chaliapin opened the second half with *Persian Love Song* followed by Conchita Supervia singing *L'ultima canzona*. The 1927 recording of *I Hear You calling Me* sung by John McCormack really set the hairs on my back of my head on end! What could possibly follow this? Well, Eide Norena did with her *Care Selve* from Handel's *Atalanta*. What a glorious sound she made. Gigli then sang Gibilaro's *Carrettieri* from 1949 followed by Mado Robin singing *Chanson Bohème*, and the concert ended with Giuseppe di Stefano singing the Sicilian folk song *A la Barcillunisa* which he recorded in 1947.

This was a live performance by artists, with one exception, all from beyond the grave. This last remark relates to one of the purposes of the talking machine, foreseen by those early pioneers in this field; that of preserving the voice for posterity. If the sounds we heard that day have in some cases lasted for over ninety years, then perhaps that wish has been granted.





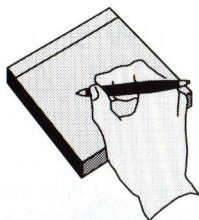
The Nimbus Foundation Concert Hall with C.L.P.G.S. members' machines in on the left side of the hall and 'Big Bertha' on the stage



Some of the Society members' talking machines on display



## LETTERS



### Help Please! (1)

Dear Chris,

I am in the process of restoring a Pathé machine which I recently acquired minus a reproducer. I have subsequently obtained a reproducer with the following inscription on the circular coloured trade mark situated behind the diaphragm: "Plays all Records - The Playall"

This inscription together with the threaded shank of the needle holder is indicative to me that some form of needle adaptation must have existed allowing for the play of both Pathé vertical-cut records and ordinary needle-cut records. I would appreciate the help of readers in furnishing me with information as to what the missing reproducer looks like and how it functions. Anyone with such a spare part for sale will be much appreciated.

Yours sincerely,

Vernon Alston, [REDACTED] Cotswold,  
Port Elizabeth 6045, Republic of South Africa.

### Help Please! (2)

Dear Chris,

I was referred to you by the EMI Music Archives. My enquiry is on how to adjust the soundbox of a gramophone to ensure minimum wear on the record. My two gramophones are both His Master's Voice (Models 163 and C101).

Yours sincerely,

Leendert Dekker, [REDACTED] Menlo Park  
0102, Republic of South Africa.

### Help Please! (3)

Dear Chris,

I have two Edison flexible horn connectors, both of which have the outer fabric damaged/moth-eaten. They do not look the part when demonstrated to interested groups, and, when bound with Sellotape to make them more airtight, they look even worse.

I was wondering if anyone could tell me how to replicate the multi-plait red and black cotton braiding? As a child I remember doing something like this on a cotton reel which had a circle of nails driven into it round the whole, but the result was a crude knitting, not braiding. Does any lady member or partner know how it can be done?

Yours sincerely,

John Taylor, Staines, Middlesex

### Help Please! (4)

Dear Sir,

As a member of the Canadian Antique Phonograph Society I am seeking help on identifying an English made phonograph, which is not an antique but rather collectable. I enclose two Polaroid photographs of it. It is just as I acquired it and is all there except for the power source that makes it go. This is a DC battery operation. The batteries have been removed but there is no information on the voltage required visible in the battery space. From the clips provided I think the machine could use 4 D-type cells. However before trying to hook it up I would like to try and find out from any collector who has one, exactly what batteries are required.

I would be grateful if any reader could help me.

Yours sincerely,

Bertram Sampson, Ontario, Canada.

{If any reader can help, please send your replies to me and I'll forward them on to Bertram. Ed.}

### Mysterious 'Gramophone'

Dear Chris,

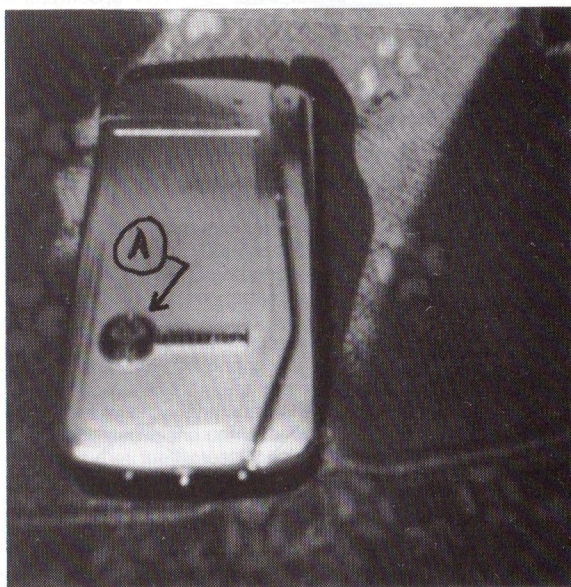
The mysterious 'gramophone' on page 151 of issue No.212 of *Hillandale News* looks to me as though it could be a recording machine.

The lower picture suggests a drive-shaft for the turntable motor to some sort of gearbox under the arm pivot. This could have driven the arm across the recording blank to produce the appropriate pitch spiral; and presumably could be disconnected to allow free movement for playback.

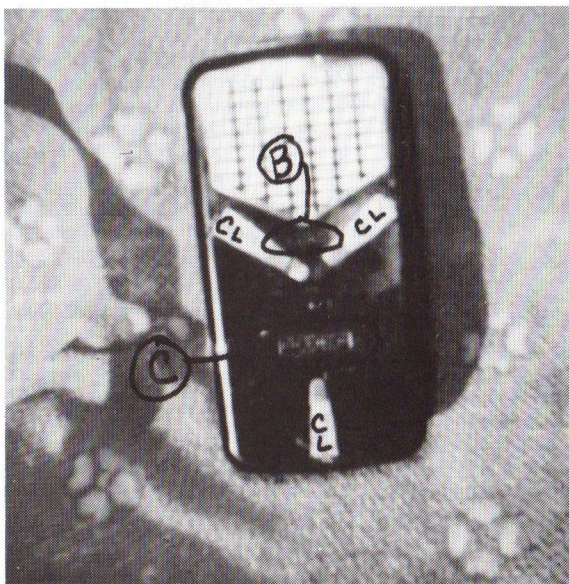
The horseshoe-magnet head could be used for either playback or recording: the former when connected to the 'gram' terminals of a wireless set; and the latter connected across the 'loud-speaker' terminals.

Without examining the actual machine I am risking 'talking through my hat'; perhaps some-





Two views of Bertram Sampson's unusual gramophone



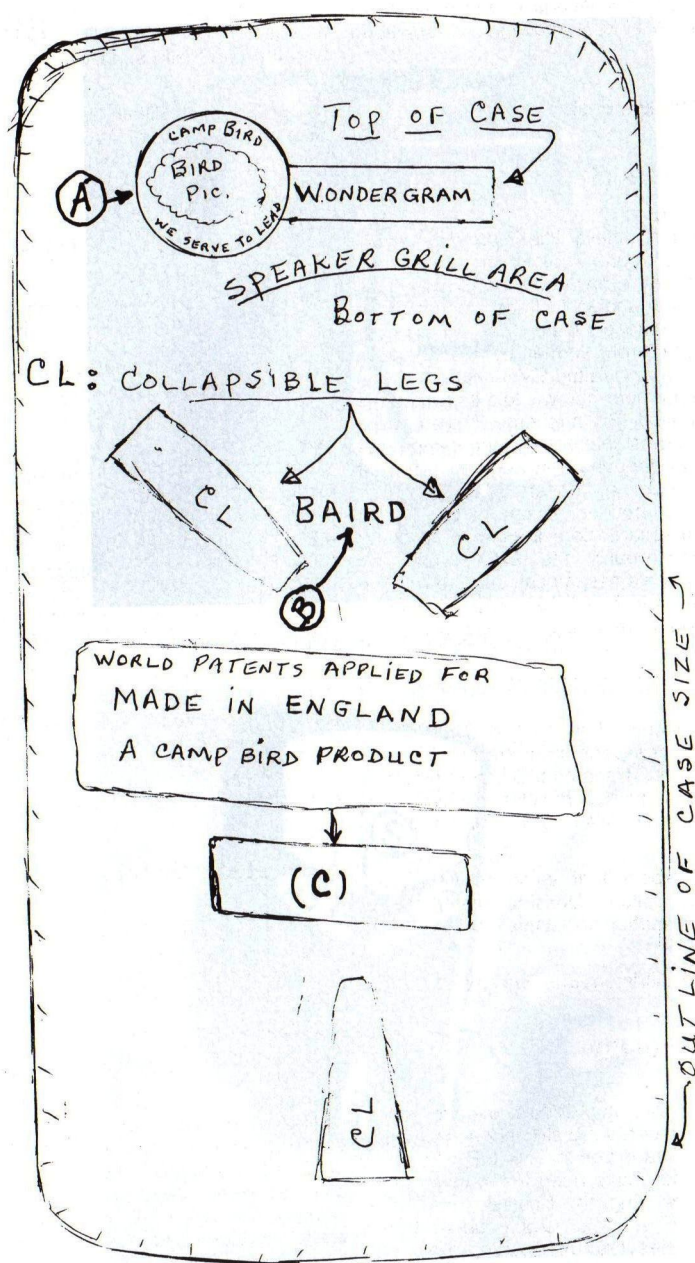


Diagram of the underside of Bertram Sampson's gramophone



one else with a knowledge of these types of machine will be able to recognise it and fill in the details.

Sincerely,  
Adrian Tuddenham, Bristol

## Topic Records (1)

Dear Mr Hamilton,  
I can give Peter Cliffe a little information about the provenance of one Topic record. During the early 1950s I read a review in *The Gramophone* (which I am now unable to trace) concerning a recording of Chinese Opera. This record was issued in 12" 78rpm format by the Workers Music Association. I visited EMG in London with the catalogue number but was told that the shop no longer supplied 78rpm records. The assistant was, however, most interested in the contents of the record and deduced that they must consist of dubbings from a French 33 $\frac{1}{3}$  rpm EP. Subsequently I obtained a copy of the 78rpm record from a record store in Harrow. Judging by the sound quality the EMG man was probably right in his assumption and the original recording seems to have been somewhat inexpertly obtained from a live performance. The catalogue number of the record is TRC 81 and the matrix numbers O 4082 and O 4083 are visible.

The opera concerned is entitled *The White-Haired Girl* and the performers are members of the Yenan Opera. It seems that the opera was probably written by a committee consisting of Chu Wei, Chang Lu, Ma K'o, Ho Ching Chi and Ting Yi!

I somehow suspect that someone who may have worked at Colletts bookshop might be able with further information about this label.

Yours sincerely,  
Alan Sheppard, Alfriston, East Sussex

## Topic Records (2)

Dear Chris,  
With reference to Peter Cliffe's letter in issue No.212, Topic Records are still very active at 50 Stroud Green Road, London N4 3EF. For the last 30 years they have been the leading label in the U.K. for English, Scottish and Irish traditional music. I know nothing about Betty Sanders; the Weavers, of course, are very

famous, had Pete Seeger in their ranks and had a reunion a few years ago. They had a hit single with the Leadbelly song *Goodnight Irene* in the 1950s.

"Rambling" Jack Elliott, like Pete Seeger, was a singing associate of Woody Guthrie. Guthrie influenced a lot of musicians (notably Bob Dylan). He died of Huntington's Chorea. Jack Elliott is still active and recently toured the U.K. Topic recently reissued his early Topic material and included one, if not both tracks Peter mentioned. Pretty Boy Floyd is a Robin Hood character (or Ned Kelly is probably closer) - an outlaw who commanded sympathy from the 'people'. The song is based on a real-life character of around 1930 but, I think I am right in saying that he was not as nice as Guthrie's song makes him to be.

Margaret Barrie was a well-known 'source' singer for Irish traditional songs. She was from gypsy stock, but was living in London when these recordings were made. She accompanied herself on the banjo (if Peter finds the banjo unusual in Irish music he has obviously never heard of the Dubliners). The banjo is by no means unusual in Irish traditional music. She was usually accompanied by Michael Gorman, a fiddle player with whom she made many recordings. Her repertoire, as correctly observed by Peter Cliffe, was street songs. Again, the recordings he cites have been recently reissued on CD by Topic.

Best wishes,  
Paul Adams, Fellside Recordings, Workington

## Topic Records (3)

Dear Chris,  
In his letter enquiring about Topic Records (*Hillandale News* 212, p152) Peter Cliffe has touched upon the edge of a rarely-encountered field in British record-collecting.

The Workers' Music Association was founded in 1936 by the late composer Alan Bush (1900-1995), who right until the end of his long life maintained an enthusiasm for communism; this political stance suffused much of his musical work (an early success was his 1929 *Dialectic* for String Quartet, recorded on Decca K 1852/3) and was surely the main cause of his relative neglect. The aims of the WMA (which still exists) included furthering "the art of music in accordance with the principle that true art, by



effectively presenting, and truthfully interpreting life as experienced by the majority of the people, can move the people to work for the betterment of human society." They also intended to "publish music, literature and gramophone records." Vice-Presidents during the 1940s included composers Benjamin Britten, Lennox Berkeley, Rutland Boughton, Alan Rawsthorne, Elizabeth Maconchy, John Ireland and the American Elie Siegmeister.

As Peter Cliffe mentioned, the Topic label is bright red and white; the overall design is in the form of the rather *art déco* WMA circular logo, with titles etc. overprinted in black. A *Gramophone* review (September 1941, p65) dealt with TRC.8, 9 and 13 "from a considerable batch of Topic Records received from the Workers' Music Association..." Advertisements for Topic Records appeared in *Our Time*, a left-wing "little" journal which started in February 1941. For instance, the April 1941 issue advertised TRC.12 as "Hits from *Jack the Giant-Killer*" at three shillings, plus sixpence Purchase Tax; that show was one of a number of political satires shown at the left-wing Unity Theatre in London. Other Topic discs include similar items from *Freedom on the March* (with music by Alan Bush), old folk-songs, songs of international political rebellion and satire, and so on. Some flavour of the series may be gauged from the very first disc, TRC.1: *The Internationale* and *The Man that waters the Workers' Beer*, both arranged by Alan Bush. Balalaika selections and *The Tractor Song* rub shoulders with Negro Songs and songs from the Spanish Civil War - "self-pity is indeed the characteristic of most of these records" was the verdict of *The Gramophone*. Performers were mainly such groups as the Topic Variety Chorus and little-known soloists, sometimes with Arnold Goldsbrough conducting (yes, the organist and harpsichordist) and there's an early appearance of Michael Redgrave (with 'Rhythm Band'). However, some recordings of broader 'serious' appeal include music by Khachaturian and Shostakovich, and folk-song settings by Elizabeth Maconchy and Bush himself; Alan Rawsthorne is represented by his two-piano arrangement *International Marching Songs of the People*, entitled - *Left! Left!*

The first batch of Topic discs, some still being advertised in *Our Time* in late 1943, run to 22 discs. Most of these are clearly original recordings by Decca, with CP-prefix matrix numbers.

Some, however, are Decca dubbings from Russian recordings, with the tell-tale "XYZ RR" type of prefix - at least three dubbings were issued also as real Decca discs (with one of these *also* on HMV). Going by the miscellaneous interpolations of matrix number style, Topic Records then appear to have used various small companies to make their recordings, many of which are dubbings from commercial discs (including some American discs by Paul Robeson) - some variants in matrix number are also apparent. The system quickly settles down to extensive use of Oriole matrix numbers (prefixed 'O'), and by reference to Peter Copeland's dating guide ('Levy's Sound Studios...' *Historic Record* 31, April 1994, pp17-20), it appears that the subsequent batches were recorded in 1950, late 1951, late 1952, mid-1953, 1954 and late 1955. That brings the issued catalogue numbers up to about TRC.80; after that, the matrix numbers seem to be mainly hand-written with prefix "WMA TRC" and I have as yet little idea of the dating of these. However, a brief review in the magazine of the English Folk Dance and Song Society ('Record Notes,' *English Dance and Song*, xxii/3, January 1958, p107) has a section entitled 'The Topic output': this deals with folk music available on the Topic label, which by now had branched out into LPs. Reference is made to 78s by Pete and Peggy Seeger, Jack Elliott ("one-time protégé of the great Woody Guthrie") and Margaret Barrie; this covers some of the discs up to TRC.107. The discs mentioned by Peter Cliffe (TRC.85, 98, 99) may thus be dated to the mid to late 1950s. It can be seen that at some stage the Topic catalogue made a definite move away from the original WMA agenda towards specific folk music of less overtly political appeal, with which the company continued independently via LP issues.

As I have acquired a fair number of Topic 78rpm discs over the years, I have been trying to make a complete listing of them. I have now collected information on 81 of them, with the highest encountered number being TRC.108 (interestingly, this one disc has a completely new label design). I invite any reader who has examples to send me information about the titles and matrix numbers - as I have indicated, there are likely to be slight variants because of dubbings. I need information on the following: 25, 27, 29, 30, 31, 39, 40, 46, 48, 50, 51, 54, 57, 67, 69, 71, 75, 77, 78, 81, 82, 83, 86, 89, 90, 94, 96, or any from 109 upwards. If anyone has an actual



Topic catalogue or advertisement listing 78s, that would also be most useful.

Best wishes,  
Peter Adamson, IT Services, St.Andrews University, Fife KY16 9SX.

## Stroboscopic Jam

Dear Chris,  
Whilst sitting at the breakfast table recently my eye was attracted to the black stripes around the edge of the lid on the marmalade jar. Instinctively I thought '78rpm!' After carefully washing the lid to remove all trace of the sticky product, the lid was placed over the turntable spindle of an electric gramophone and, to my surprise, was spot-on as a 78rpm stroboscope. As the lines are viewed horizontally it is easier to use than the flat vertically-viewed stroboscope.

The product is Robertson's Golden Shredless Marmalade, which I had not previously used. All I have to do now is to remember to retrieve the lid when the jar is discarded!

Yours sincerely,  
Tony Voysey, Dursley, Gloucestershire

{This is not the only stroboscopic connection with James Robertson and Sons Ltd. In the early 1930s The British Homophone Co. Ltd. made a record advertising Robertson's Golden Shred which was issued on their Solex label. The label had a stroboscope printed on its circumference. The artists on this record were The All Star Orchestra (a pseudonym for Nat Starr and His Orchestra) performing *Coo-ee* (Fox trot) and *Janine* (Waltz), both with vocal refrain. The record had no catalogue number but the matrix number was AX 100+7. One side of the record held the recordings, while the reverse side had a striking 7" diameter coloured advertisement for Golden Shred. Incidentally James Robertson and Sons Ltd. was a Scottish company based in Paisley. I once had a girl friend who was a member of this family but the relationship broke up at the time the company closed their Scottish operations and transferred their headquarters to their Manchester factory! Ed.}

## Dates

Dear Chris,  
With reference to *Hillandale News* No.201 and the review by Peter Adamson of the first issue of my *DATES - Date About All Those English Seventy-eights* on pages 195-7. May I remind him of his statement on page 197: "Incidentally, if there really exists a reference somewhere to (Decca) S.10001, I'd like to know what it is!"

I can now help him with his research and knowledge. If Peter refers to page 149 of *Hillandale News* No.212, there in a CD review by one "Peter Adamson" is the statement that "...not for nothing was the famous *Delius Sea Drift* recording (Decca S.10010-2) withdrawn within a few months of issue."

Also with reference to your comment on page 153 of the same issue, EMI also press 78s for the *Cruisin' the 50s* label which releases rock'n roll numbers.

Many thanks for a splendid and interesting magazine, and also for the help and ready assistance given by yourself and members with our booklet *DATES* which is still flourishing and continually being updated as more research is done.

Yours sincerely,  
Eddie Shaw, London EC1

{This still does not answer Peter's question. What is Decca S.10001? Does it exist and if it does what were the recordings on it? Ed.}

## HMV 109

Dear Chris,  
Mr Voysey asks, in the October 1996 issue, for a date and model number for an HMV 109 that might be something else. He does not give us very much to go on, apart from the absence of an 'automatic start' (which is not, in any case, a *sine qua non* of a 109).

Various models could be described as 'similar' to the 109, depending on your definition of 'similar'.

The 108 has the same case (13¼" x 15" x 18¼"), but a No.2 soundbox on a goose-neck tone-arm. The 103 has a No.4 soundbox and narrow-bore swan-neck tone-arm, no automatic brake and a lighter case with different base moulding. (The rarely seen 107 has the same case, with No.2 soundbox and goose-neck tone-arm.) The 103 and 107 both have a single-spring motor.

The 11 has a No.4 soundbox and narrow-bore arm, automatic (non self-setting) brake and larger case with different lid and base mouldings (it measures 13½" x 15½" x 19").

The 109, 111 and 103 were all introduced in late 1925. 111 and early 109 models had the well-established automatic brake, which had to be set for the final groove on each record. The early 109 had a simple lid-stay which needed to be released by hand when the lid was closed.

By September 1926, an automatic lid-stay was fitted - a non-HMV fitting, of the sort with a two-lobed cam, requiring the lid to be raised a fraction before it can be lowered. The new 'self-setting' brake (operated by an eccentric run-out groove in the record) had also appeared, but it still had to be released by hand. (These early reciprocating brakes had a spring-loaded pawl which made a 'tick' every time it passed over a tooth in the ratchet while a record was being played.) Also at about this time, a gold transfer appeared on the motor board, giving the model number.

The self-releasing brake (in which the movement of the tone-arm to the right pulls the brake off) probably first appeared on the Re-entrant models of November 1927, but would have spread soon after to other machines. To begin with, the hand release lever was left in place. By now, the 109 had a third type of lid-stay, with a knuckle-joint held in position by two spring-loaded ball-bearings. The 109 was withdrawn in 1930, some months after the introduction of the completely new 104 and 130 in 1929.

Yours,  
Christopher Proudfoot, Longfield, Kent

## Light-ray recordings (1)

Dear Chris,  
I have found reference to this subject in *The Fabulous Phonograph* by Roland Gelatt and quote the relevant passage as follows:

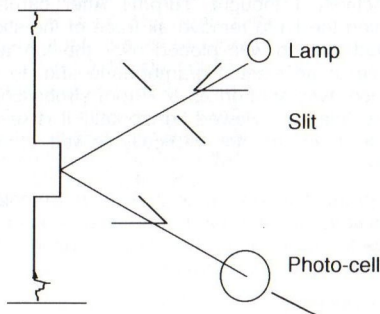
"In collaboration with the General Electric Company Brunswick had built an all-electric phonograph which it deemed practical for use in the home. It was called the Panotrope and came in various models (with or without radio) for \$350 and up. Together with this pioneering instrument the first electrical record player to be placed on sale, Brunswick had a new system of electrical recording to offer, also developed by general Electric. Instead of using a microphone the Brunswick-GE method relied on light rays and a photo-electric cell. A powerful beam of light was reflected to the cell by a tiny crystal mirror so mounted as to respond to the minute vibrations of sound waves; thus the movements of the mirror could be translated into electrical vibrations by the photo-electric cell and subsequently subsequently made to engrave a phonograph record. It sounds complicated and it was. Brunswick's Light-ray method was not destined to last long."

This was in 1925. As Mr Gelatt was from the U.S.A., to avoid confusion read 'gramophone' for 'phonograph'.

Yours sincerely,  
Tony Voysey, Dursley, Gloucestershire

## Light-ray recordings (2)

Dear Chris,  
Brunswick's Light-ray, mentioned in Gelatt's *Fabulous Phonograph* (incidentally only warranting one line) was a photo-electric microphone.



A tiny mirror mounted on the diaphragm modulated the output of a photo-electric cell. Despite graphic record sleeve notes, its range was 500Hz less than existing cutter/microphone systems.

When moving coil or condenser microphones were in their infancy, or anyway their use was under licence from patent owners, this attempt at an optical microphone was a worthy attempt away from solidback carbon.

Yours,  
John R. Gomer, Colchester, Essex

## Hillandale News

Back issues of the magazine are available from me at **£2.00** for each of the issues for **1989/90, 1990/91, 1991/92, 1992/93 and 1993/94** (April 1990 and August 1990 issues are not available except in photocopy form.) I can also supply any issue from **No.101** in photocopy form at **£2.00** per issue.

These prices include postage. Please send any orders with cheques/postal orders made out to C.L.P.G.S. to me:

Chris Hamilton, [REDACTED] Cupar,  
Fife KY15 4EP, U.K.

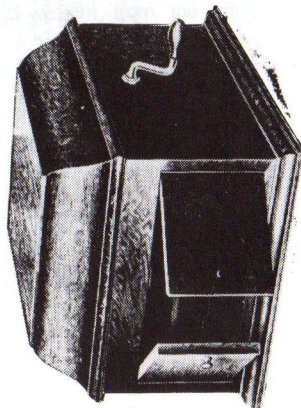




# THE NEW GRAMOPHONE



Model 103



Height . . . . . 12½ in.  
 Width . . . . . 15½ in.  
 Depth . . . . . 18½ in.  
*Internal Fittings : Nickel-Plated and Enamel*  
*External Fittings : Oxidized*

**SIR LONDON RONALD** says : " The most amazing tone of any Gramophone I have ever heard."

**MODEL 103** New Type Internal Horn, New Type Amplifying Tone Arm with Bull-bearing Socket, 'His Master's Voice' No. 4 Sound Box, which is also entirely new in design. Wax Finish Oak Cabinet, single spring motor, 10 in. turntable, playing 10 in. and 12 in. records, graduated speed regulator. Needle bowls for new and used needles.  
*Also made in Mahogany.*

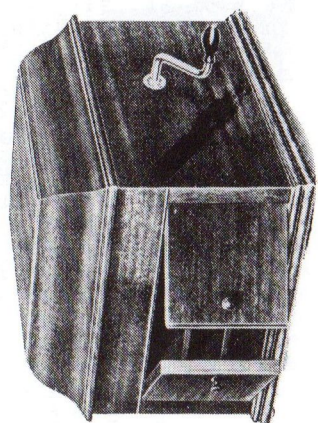
**TABLE GRAND**  
*Mahogany*  
**£8 : 10 : 0**  
*Oak*  
**£7 : 10 : 0**



# THE NEW GRAMOPHONE



Model 109



Height . . . . . 13½ in.  
 Width . . . . . 15 in.  
 Depth . . . . . 18½ in.  
*Internal Fittings : Nickel-Plated and Enamel*  
*External Fittings : Oxidized*

**ALBERT COATES** says : " Most remarkable in its faithful reproduction."

**MODEL 109** New Type Internal Horn, New Type Amplifying Tone Arm with Bull-bearing Socket, 'His Master's Voice' No. 4 Sound Box, which is also entirely new in design. Satin Finish Mahogany Cabinet. Sunk needle bowls for new and used needles. Double spring motor, 10 in. turntable playing records up to 12 in. in diameter, automatic brake, speed indicator and regulator.  
*Also made in Oak.*

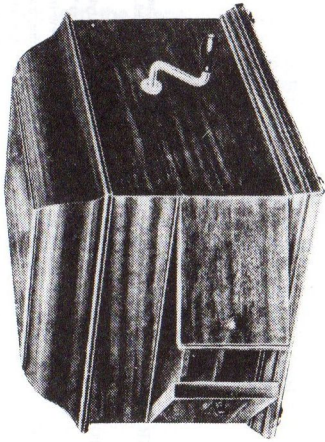
**TABLE GRAND**  
*Mahogany*  
**£12 : 0 : 0**  
*Oak*  
**£10 : 10 : 0**



## THE NEW GRAMOPHONE



### Model 111



Height . . . . . 13<sup>1</sup>/<sub>2</sub> in.  
Width . . . . . 15<sup>1</sup>/<sub>2</sub> in.  
Depth . . . . . 19 in.  
*Internal Fittings: Nickel-Plated and Enamel*  
*External Fittings: Oxidised*

**EUGENE GOOSSENS** says: "A prodigious achievement: in quality and volume."

**MODEL 111**  
**TABLE GRAND**  
*Mahogany*  
**£16:0:0**  
*Oak*  
**£14:0:0**

New Type Internal Horn, New Type Amplifying Tone Arm with Ball-bearing Socket, His Master's Voice, No. 4 Sound Box, which is also entirely new in design, Best Sain Finish Mahogany Cabinet. Sink needle bowls for new and used needles. Automatic lid stay fitted to lid, enabling it to be fixed into position and released by means of hand only. Double spring motor, 10 in. turntable, automatic brake and speed regulator, automatic speed indicator.

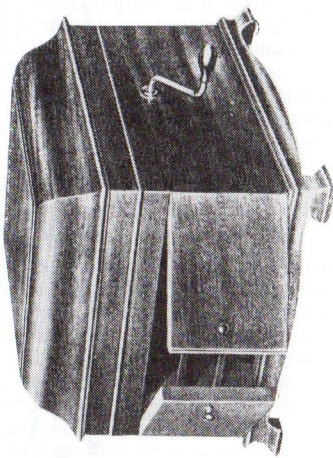
*Also made in Oak.*



## THE NEW GRAMOPHONE



### Model 126



Height . . . . . 14<sup>1</sup>/<sub>2</sub> in.  
Width . . . . . 17 in.  
Depth . . . . . 20<sup>1</sup>/<sub>2</sub> in.  
*Internal Fittings: Nickel-Plated and Enamel*  
*External Fittings: Oxidised*

**SIR EDWARD ELGAR, O.M.,** says: "The most important invention in the history of the Gramophone."

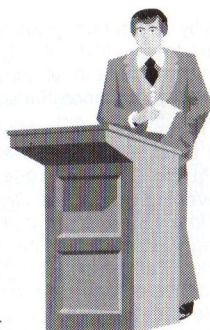
**MODEL 126**  
**TABLE GRAND**  
*Mahogany*  
**£20:0:0**  
*Oak*  
**£18:0:0**

New Type Internal Horn, New Type Amplifying Tone Arm with Ball-bearing Socket, His Master's Voice, No. 4 Sound Box, which is also entirely new in design, Best Sain Finish Mahogany Cabinet. Sink needle bowls for new and used needles. Automatic lid stay fitted to lid, enabling it to be fixed into position and released by using one hand only. Double spring motor, 12 in. turntable, automatic brake and speed regulator, automatic speed indicator.

*Also made in Oak.*



## REPORTS



### London Meeting, August 20th 1996

Ron Coppleston, our speaker, was at some time employed in the radio industry with firms like Cossor and Philips and in retirement is a member of The Plastics Historical Society. He devoted the first part of the programme to workshop demonstrations of 'difficult' or broken records he had repaired, starting with those flexible Duriums with two items featured on one side. He showed how warped examples may be glued to an old shellac 78, or to a cardboard base. Damaged 78s themselves were more difficult, but a chinagraph pencil featured large.

Replicating an existing 78 was more difficult still but the audience was challenged to identify the original and replicated versions of Zonophone T 5524 (*Teddy Bears' Picnic* by the International Novelty Quartette). By using prepared illustrations it was shown that the 78 had a liquid silicone rubber casting made, from which a positive cast epoxy resin record could be formed overnight. No high pressure steam pressures were involved as in commercial pressing, merely a weight from the kitchen scales.

Did the audience guess which was the original and the copied record? It did, but more by luck than aural judgement. The copy was excellent.

The meeting was concluded by a programme of lighter records designed for a summer evening, and our grateful thanks go to Win Andrews and Joyce Edwards for refreshing us all with tea and coffee.

### A London Correspondent

### London Meeting, September 17th 1996

This was the second panel of Barry Raynaud's technical triptych on the history of sound recording and started at the adaptation of sound to the silent cinema. Ever since moving pictures were invented there had been attempts to join sound with film, but there were always difficulties not really overcome until the Warner Brothers and others produced the Vitaphone in the mid-twenties, a disc sound system. When Movietone's sound-on-film followed Warner's the doors opened to many fortunes being made or lost with at least 200 variants of the system.

The later hi-fi owed much to the cinema amplifiers, even the non-scientific names of woofer, squawker and tweeter were heard first among the installers of the 'thirties. Control, switching, transformers and pick-ups of the day were discussed.

Early output was only 10 watts, 20 watts being the exception; now it is in the thousands, often to match noisy audiences.

The generosity of the logarithmic horn was then touched on: a speaker like this has been found to be 5 times as efficient as a cone with the same input and has stacking advantages where a quantity have to be transported.

The various possibilities of amplifiers were explained - 'the heart of any sound system' - and Barry declared himself a proponent of valves in amplification. These have a place if set up properly and give a better performance playback, a controversial theory that only the experts can answer. Valve amplifiers are certainly more costly.

Several sheets of performance graphs and drawings of sound systems were circulated and explained, showing how a complex amplifier system can be built up from simple sections. This was an interesting technical evening of material given previously to the BBC Engineering Society, and to judge from our members' participation, it was appreciated. Thank you Barry.

A number of illustrations were played from 78 records.

### A London Correspondent

## London Meeting, October 15th 1996

*Americana on Cylinders* - George Glastris, narrator, and Dominic Combe, cylinder jockey, presented some 15 cylinders (all Amberols) including one Royal Purple, in an excellent programme which covered many aspects of American life during the early years of recording. Cylinders dated from 1912-1929 with such titles as *Aunt Dinah's Golden Wedding*, *Alderman Doolin's Campaign* and *War Talk at Pumpkin Center*.

Artists included Polk Miller, Len Spencer, Marie Rappold, Homer Rodeheaver, Billy Murray, and last, but not least, the man himself: Thomas Alva Edison (Cylinder 3756, June 1919) in *Lest We Forget*, the only recording of himself that he released.

A most satisfying evening, the contents of the programme doing full justice to the title.

## Soundbox

## Northern Group Meeting, Alston Hall, Preston, September 22nd 1996

Well here is our next report. You may have heard that Ann has gone and fallen over something resembling a vintage hand sewing machine and broken her arm. What a good job it was a sewing machine, eh! I am having to do all the Tipp Ritting and that, but never mind, she is getting better by the next report and she should be ready to do it.

For our September meeting Bill Kloet of *The 78 Record Exchange*, Stockport, was our Guest Speaker, his subject relating to the Cinema with emphasis on the sound systems used. The choice of his subject was due to this being the Centenary Year of the Cinema.

Bill's very well prepared and beautifully presented talk began with Walt Disney's cartoon, *Skeleton Dance*, of 1929. This was the first cartoon film using disc sound, the image being subservient to the sound-track. This was followed by the first 'talking' Laurel and Hardy film, called *Unaccustomed as we are* and was also originally on disc sound.

Optical sound was used for the remaining examples which included *Betty Boop* (1933), a very interesting *Movietone News Review* of 1938, and finally in the first group the first colour

Silly Symphony, entitled *The Old Mill* (also made in 1938) clearly illustrated the massive improvement in all aspects of film making in the eight years since *Skeleton Dance*.

The second group consisted of Post World War II films. First Bill showed us Ronnie Waldman's *Puzzle Corner* of 1954, but the highlight of the evening was *In the Groove* one of the *March of Time* series, presented by a very young sounding Alistair Cook - the topic was *The History of the Gramophone*, and showed some wonderful scenes of recording sessions, both acoustic and electric as well as some beautifully detailed shots of phonographs and gramophones and record pressing procedures. Being made in 1949 it mentioned the introduction of the LP, but was unsure of its future and that of the 78.

As is usual at Alston Hall our members enjoyed afternoon tea in the dining room before departing home.

## Miles Mallinson

## Midlands Group, Record Fair, September 28th 1996

This event was held at St. Matthew's Church Hall, East Park Way, Wolverhampton. This year there was a small increase in stallholders supporting the event and a slight decrease in customers coming through the gate. The fair was still one of the most successful the group has held at this venue.

There were five stalls with a comprehensive range of machines for sale and several with large numbers of Diamond Discs and cylinders for sale as well as the usual hordes of 78s and associated ephemera. The enthusiast had a wealth of choice. Fortunately the weather was good and the ladies supplied plenty of liquid and solid goodies for consumption by the punter. One sour note must be sounded. Two stallholders suffered from thefts. Mr John Cully lost a box containing many needle tins and packets of matches with the HMV logo... Michael Comber lost three valuable catalogues (a Victor 1923, a Victor 1936 and a Zonophone 1932. If any reader can throw any light on these despicable acts please would he/she kindly telephone Geoff Howl on [REDACTED].

We still feel that this friendly society together should be better supported by members - **do come and support us next year.**

## Geoff Howl



## West of England Branch, August 11th 1996

Under a threatening sky the branch met on the above date at Upton Pynes (the magnificent stately home where Keith and Irene Badman have had a flat for many years). So well known is the name of 'Badman' amongst collectors that it is hardly necessary to mention that Keith is the second largest manufacturer of phonograph reproducers - second only to the factory at West Orange, New Jersey, which has not done business for a long time.

The day's events were entitled *Picnic and Portables in the Park* and after a brief historical overview of the house, Keith pronounced the event underway and played a record on a later HMV portable using a reproducer (sound box? Ed.) that.....he had made himself. We were delighted by this characteristic gesture.

Food we had brought was unpacked and the portables began to entertain us. In all about a dozen models were on show, an early Decca of Eric Whiteway's playing, I thought, especially well, although for ingenuity the prize would have gone to Ron Todd who demonstrated a gramophone which was no more than a piece of folded card used in missionary educational work in the third world, called *cardtalk*. There was a good mix of music and the portables just kept playing.

By about four o'clock, we had all had a lovely afternoon and a sudden cloudburst brought an end to the proceedings. Our thanks go to Keith and Irene for their organisation and hospitality. It was greatly appreciated.

News of the **next meeting**, this will be at **27 Blackall Road, Exeter on Saturday 14th December 1996**, when a programme of *Early American Discs* will be played. Seasonal refreshments will be available. Please arrive at 7.00pm for 7.30pm. All welcome - and as usual, a prize for the one who has come from the furthest point.

**Paul Morris**



**Saturday April 12th 1997, 10am to 4pm at  
Fairfields School, Trinity Avenue, Northampton**

Contact **Ruth Lambert**, [redacted] Northampton,  
for further details. Tel: [redacted] Please include S.A.E.



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